



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## A FOREIGN ESTIMATE OF MR. ROOSEVELT.

BY ANGLO-AMERICAN.

---

THE characteristic of President Roosevelt is that he is always wanting to do something; the characteristic of the American Constitution is that it is a sort of conspiracy for doing nothing. To me, at least, the ceaseless, subterranean conflict between these two characteristics has been the most interesting feature of the Presidency of Mr. Roosevelt. He is a man who, with an unresting instinct for leadership and domination, finds himself cribbed, cabined and confined by an office that makes leadership on any large scale almost impossible.

The Sages of 1789 framed the Constitution under the dread of a strong Executive. Whatever else the President might be, they took good care he should not be a George the Third. They were morbidly on the defensive against the evils of "one-man power." Accordingly, the functions and authority of each power in the State were so limited that no one person, no one body, is capable of leading either the nation or the legislature, or of framing and pursuing a continuous policy. Each organ of government—the Executive, the Legislature, the Judiciary—is made a jealous observer and restrainer of the others. Nobody has even a comparatively free hand. The framers of the Constitution, I have always thought, accomplished more than they intended. They divided the Executive from the Legislature so firmly as to make each not only independent of the other, but in a sense hostile, and therefore weak. The connecting link which in England goes under the name of the Cabinet they either missed or did not appreciate. In the quiet times which have ordinarily been the lot of the Republic, I do not know that much inconvenience has resulted from the rivalries of this triad of authorities. Some great questions, the currency for instance, which under a more positive form of govern-

ment would have been settled long ago, have been merely tinkered at. But many rash schemes of legislation have been squashed, many hot-headed Presidents held in check, many successive Houses "taught their place." It is when the country is face to face with some national peril, and immediate action becomes imperative, that the Presidential system of 1789 shows its defects. At all such times Congress practically abdicates. This was what happened during the war of 1812, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War; and there is really no choice in the matter. An autocracy in times of emergency is the price America has to pay for her checks and balances in ordinary times.

It is, therefore, extremely difficult for an Englishman to appraise with any accuracy the extent of the President's authority. From one aspect, he seems to have more real power than the German Emperor; from another, one might argue that his influence on legislation is considerably less than a British Premier's. Even when his party commands a majority in both Houses his power over the actual course of legislation depends almost wholly on the good-will of Congress. He may recommend everything, but he can direct nothing. Neither he nor his Cabinet Ministers sit in Congress or hold any recognized communication with it except through the medium of written messages. I have even noticed that an appeal to the known wishes or opinions of the President is resented as dictation. The President, it is true, has his veto, and that is a powerful weapon, for defence at any rate. It is in attack that he is tied and hampered. His Presidential Messages may point the way, but neither he nor any one can insure that it will be followed. Congress in all such matters is its own master, and the success of any Administration depends on the harmony that exists between Congress and the Executive.

This is as much as to say that the qualities most useful to a President in the discharge of his office are those rather of a diplomat than of a leader; and that his success will be more in proportion to his skill in the small arts of managing men than to his capacity for framing schemes of legislation and insisting on their being carried. The type of Executive to which the Constitution naturally inclines was excellently exemplified by the character and method of Mr. McKinley. Mr. McKinley appeared to subordinate everything to the maintenance of harmony between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. He oiled the machinery

of Government with a loving and imperturbable patience, and the wheels ran with an ease unknown since Washington's first term of office. His was a cautious, persuasive, accordant nature. He hated to say No. Outside of Protection, he had few interests and fewer convictions; none, perhaps, that he would not have felt it a duty to sacrifice at the bidding of the people. He accepted fully and heartily the doctrine that the President should follow and not attempt to lead public opinion. Great things happened during his Presidency, but he can hardly be said to have presided over them. Once convinced of what the people wanted—and his instinct in such matters was all but infallible; he knew his countrymen as Palmerston knew Englishmen—Mr. McKinley would work overtime to see that they got it. His ways of dealing with Congress were such as sprang inevitably from his conception of the Presidential duties. They were those of adroit persuasion. He consulted everybody, humored everybody, put himself frankly in the hands of his friends, made the utmost use of patronage as a gentle weapon of conciliation, and usually reached his goal.

The American Presidency is a very human office. Its influence depends at least as much on the man who occupies it as on its Constitutional prerogatives. Unless it be the Papacy, I know of no office in which personality counts for more and opinions for less. The accession of Mr. Roosevelt meant a change, not because his policy differed from Mr. McKinley's, but because in character, disposition and their instinctive views of Presidential functions, the two men stood at opposite poles. As politicians, they were in agreement to a degree rarely, if ever, attained by a President and a Vice-President; as men they were fundamentally dissimilar. The contrast between the new Executive and the old was so sharp as to be almost revolutionary. I do not wonder that the conservatism of America involuntarily shuddered when it compared the present and the possibilities of the future with the placid and frictionless past. Even in Europe there were some misgivings. People suspected Mr. Roosevelt of a tendency to jingoism; they recalled some outbursts of ultra-Bismarckian frankness on the Monroe Doctrine and on the Alaska difficulty; they knew that he was the only living ruler who had led a regiment on the battlefield; and they had read in his books some rather elementary panegyrics of war as a healthy national exercise. It was not, therefore, without uneasiness and a certain expectancy of

lively times ahead that Europe, and England especially, watched Mr. Roosevelt's accession. I am bound to say that this uneasiness has now completely vanished. It took William II. ten years to live down the nervousness which his elevation to the throne of the Hohenzollerns inspired. It took Theodore Roosevelt just one year. We recognize in him a new and more determined force in foreign affairs, but not a bellicose force. Viewing him simply as an American President, it struck Englishmen that he was a reversion to an older type—the type that prevailed more abundantly before the coming of the Boss, and when merit in a Presidential candidate was considered of more importance than “availability.” Mr. Roosevelt interested Englishmen particularly because he seemed to belong rather to the English than to the American order of public men. Long before he became Vice-President, we knew of him as a mighty hunter and a good all-round sportsman. We watched him in Cuba doing all the brilliant, reckless and Quixotic things that attract the applause of the populace. We watched him again in the Governorship of New York, bending the “machine” to his will with consummate ability and courage. We knew that he was a college man, with a good lineage behind him, a gentleman both in the right and in the technical sense, and a man of independent means. We have always felt an affinity with Mr. Roosevelt; we can imagine him taking part in English politics just as he is; we detect a greater congruity in him with English public life than we ever discerned in Presidents Harrison, Garfield, McKinley or Cleveland. Mr. Sydney Brooks, dwelling on this in a recent number of *Harper's Weekly*, said:

“If he [Mr. Roosevelt] were an Englishman people feel that he would have explored every inch of the Empire, shot all the big game to be found in it, won his Blue at Oxford or Cambridge, kept a pack of hounds, written some slashing books on Wellington and Nelson and the heroes of the Indian Mutiny, captured De Wet, annexed an empire or two, and made his mark in Parliament as a progressive Conservative. People here feel they would know what to do with Mr. Roosevelt, and I dare say Mr. Roosevelt feels he would know what to do with them.”

One of the reasons why Mr. Roosevelt would succeed so well in English politics is that the instinct for command is innate in him. He has a natural gift for exhortation, instruction, telling people what to do and think. He cannot help leading. I do not

mean to imply that this quality in any way unfits him for American public life. On the contrary, the force of its attractiveness is peculiarly felt by Americans, who are an emotional people, always ready to exalt any man who rises even an inch above the undistinguished multitude, swiftly responsive to a touch of firmness. They will follow a leader, when they find one, farther than most nations, and forgive him, as they forgave Grant, almost anything. In politics, especially, the man who trusts to his own strength and will fight to the last for his convictions, commands their instant homage. Mr. Roosevelt has this quality of political courage to a degree that Cleveland did not equal and Lincoln did not surpass; and with the masses it is the sheet-anchor of his strength. But the politicians, with their natural preference for a "manageable" President, do not like it, and I am not sure that the Constitution wholly approves of it. It has, at any rate, been obvious enough that Mr. Roosevelt by coercion has not been able to accomplish as much as Mr. McKinley by persuasion. That his methods are more inspiring to watch can hardly be doubted, but whether they are so successful in getting things done is another and more dubious question. Take, for instance, the Cuban Reciprocity Treaty. I immensely admire the fight he made on its behalf, but I can scarcely doubt that Mr. McKinley would have achieved the same result without any fight at all. Mr. Roosevelt was mandatory, vehement, almost belligerent in his advocacy of the measure; Mr. McKinley would have coaxed it through Congress with barely a rub. On the other hand, had Mr. McKinley by some miracle failed at the first attempt, I question whether he would have tried again. With Mr. Roosevelt, to fail once is simply to make success a certainty the second time; and nothing could have been finer—remembering that his Presidency had but just begun and that its success absolutely depended on keeping the party together and avoiding friction with Congress—than the way in which he stuck to his guns, rallied public opinion to his side, and eventually forced the Legislature to do his bidding.

One of Mr. McKinley's greatest successes was his loosening of the bonds that tie the Southern States in an unhealthy and wholly factitious alliance to the Democratic party. Mr. Roosevelt, by some acts of almost gratuitous clumsiness, has restored that alliance in all its old rigidity, and in doing so has aroused a bitterness of racial passion in the South unequalled since the horrors of the

Reconstruction Period. Here, again, it has not been so much the thing done as his abruptly irritating way of doing it that has caused the trouble. Mr. McKinley would, of course, have been incapable of any such disastrous blunder as the Booker Washington lunch; but Mr. McKinley appointed far more negroes to office than Mr. Roosevelt has ventured to, and yet, roughly speaking, no one took any notice of it. I cannot, at a distance of three thousand miles, even attempt to explain why a policy pursued by Mr. Roosevelt should appear so much more obnoxious than the same policy when pursued by Mr. McKinley. But I suspect that the cause of it will be found to be not unconnected with the value of manner in politics. Mr. Roosevelt has little of the appreciation of manner that Mr. McKinley cultivated. He has none of his predecessor's suavity and suppleness, none of his extraordinary skill in reconciling, humoring, persuading—in short, none of his great personal and political tact. To a man, indeed, who sees what he sees clearly and instantaneously, who feels what he feels with almost physical intensity, who is about equally compact of positiveness and emotionalism, tact probably seems superfluous, and the exercise of it a waste of time. Hints and paraphrases and the tedious waiting while stupidity makes up its mind, are not for him. But I should not call him an impulsive man. He is a man of impulses and they are strong and vivid, but they rarely get out of hand or succeed in breaking through his background of solid Dutch caution and level-headedness. That he has to keep a constant watch over himself and his emotions is true enough; but it is also true that he all but invariably succeeds in doing so. Mind and feelings work side by side in him and at a speed that the average man finds it difficult to keep up with. But feelings alone are never his guide; still less are mere theories. It has always been the characteristic of Mr. Roosevelt to mingle altruism with practicality. He recognizes facts with a candor abhorrent to the hypercritical mugwump. In some ways, I do not know a more thoroughly "practical" politician in all America, unless it be Mr. Croker. The "strenuous life" he used to be so fond of talking about is, I take it, simply a life of honest, active endeavor in any sphere. But to meet with Mr. Roosevelt's approval it must also be a life that is regulated by judgment and good sense. His own temperament is essentially Whiggish, content to advance a step at a time, inexorable on vital points, but never yielding to the

extremists. His books reflect him with unmistakable precision. The prose is hard, confident, metallic, without light or shade, yet strong in its rush and resonance. He moves swiftly along the road of clanking commonplace. I do not suppose that in all he has published you will find a single original or a single stupid idea. His mind is both inquisitive and acquisitive, thoroughly sane, not shallow, but certainly not deep, healthily non-creative, a good, wholesome bludgeon of a mind. Nor is it only the man's mind that appears in his writings; the man himself is equally obvious, in all his clean-cut openness and straightforward sincerity.

It has often been said that one of the best tests of a President's character is to be found in the appointments he makes. Judged, then, by the quality of his appointments, I think Mr. Roosevelt must rank among the most capable and public-spirited Presidents in American history. No President has so persistently eliminated "politics" from his nominations, none has been more unbending in making efficiency his sole test; and none has held Senators to a stricter account for the proper use of their prerogatives. I cannot see that he has in any way trespassed on the Senatorial preserves or attempted to usurp any of the powers vested in them by the Constitution. What he has done is to insist on a new and higher standard by which those powers are to be exercised. In that attitude, inflexibly maintained, he has shown equal courage and judiciousness, neither foregoing his Constitutional rights nor stretching them, neither appearing as a slave to party nor superior to it. Indeed, it would be difficult to say where Mr. Roosevelt has failed on the administrative side of his office. No President ever brought to the discharge of his Executive duties anything like Mr. Roosevelt's varied experience and thorough qualifications. I would not claim for him the sole credit for the remarkable records which Mr. Root and Mr. Moody have achieved in their respective Departments, nor yet for the excellent start that has been made with the Bureau of Commerce and Labor; but the tone and capacity of the public services have immensely improved in the last three years—in spite of the Post-office scandals—and for much of the improvement Mr. Roosevelt's own spirit and example must be responsible.

Turning from matters of administration to those of domestic policy and legislation, the centre of interest, for an Englishman, is naturally shifted to Mr. Roosevelt's "campaign" against the



Trusts. The spectacular nature of that campaign forced the attention of all Europe; as to its intrinsic value, opinions differed. Personally it seems to me that the popular agitation on the subject had reached a point where it could no longer be ignored; that if Mr. Roosevelt had attempted to ignore it, the Democrats would at once have turned it to account; that the course he actually steered was a judicious mean between the intemperance of Bryanism and the fearfulness or indifference of some of his own followers; and that if the panic about the Trusts has now largely passed, the reason is to be looked for in the calm spirit, the courage and sanity with which Mr. Roosevelt tackled the problem. By persisting in and finally carrying his demand for "Publicity," Mr. Roosevelt has not only stolen the Democratic thunder, but warded off the danger that the Trusts would be dealt with in a moment of frenzy or in a spirit of blind vengeance. That is to say, he has perfectly justified his original statement that his movement against the Trusts was a movement really in favor of Capital, of Labor and of the public interests. If the Trusts are no longer a "vital" issue, it is Mr. Roosevelt whom the Wall Street magnates should thank; and their gratitude should be all the greater when they reflect at what little cost to themselves the President has contrived to appease the public mind. On the other hand, I think the best commercial opinion of England has pronounced against Mr. Roosevelt's action in the Northern Securities case, on the ground, first, that a railway consolidation is, from the point of view of public interests, a very different thing from an ordinary industrial amalgamation; secondly, that the process of railway unification has immensely promoted the convenience of the travelling public and has brought security to the railways, to investors and to the shippers of goods; and, thirdly, that the effect of the Northern Securities decision on the two railroads concerned was, for all practical purposes, *nil*, that their special relations will continue to be as intimate as ever, and that all that was destroyed was the financial form in which those relations were expressed. I confess to a good deal of sympathy with this reasoning. No sensible American, I apprehend, wants to go back to the days of cut-throat railroad competition with its permanent waste, furious rate-wars and their concomitant evils of rebates, discriminations and systematic favoritism. Everybody recognizes that unity and stability in service, rates, fares, time-tables and so on

are the true principles of a good railway system. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act unhappily recognizes nothing of the kind. It denounces every arrangement between companies to fix rates, for instance, as a combination "in restraint of trade." No matter how reasonable the arrangement might be, or how much the public might benefit by it, the law condemns it. The true moral, in my opinion, to be drawn from the Northern Securities decision is not that the Sherman Anti-Trust Act should be enforced, but that it should be altered. As it stands, it is simply a relic of the competitive age lasting on into an age of consolidation. It may create uncertainty and disorganize business temporarily, but it cannot restrain or even hinder the deep-seated movement towards amalgamation. It is possible that, before very long, all the railways of the United States may be found grouped together in some ten or twelve systems. It is possible that from this stage they may pass into the ownership of the Government. What is not possible is that they should ever split up into the tangle of ill-connected and desperately competing lines from which they have emerged. Congress would do better to recognize this at once, to grant the railroad companies a greater legal freedom, and at the same time take stricter precautions against their abuse of it. Mr. Roosevelt justified his resurrection of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act by urging that, the law being on the Statute Book, he was bound to enforce it. That is a lawyer's quibble, not the argument of a statesman. If that view obtained, no law would ever become obsolete. He is apparently unconscious of any intermediate stage between the enforcement of a law and its repeal.

Englishmen, who do not live under a written Constitution, have little inclination for political pedantry. They could not, therefore, sympathize with the Democratic attacks made upon Mr. Roosevelt for his intervention in the coal strike on the ground that it was unconstitutional. To Englishmen, the Presidential office never seemed to display a higher usefulness than at that moment. Their only wonder was that intervention had been so long delayed. Neither could they support the capitalists' plea that Mr. Roosevelt's action would "increase the arrogance of Labor and fill it with the mischievous notion that the President was its special protector." If Labor really felt any temptation to wax "arrogant," I conceive that Mr. Roosevelt's decisiveness in the Miller case must have made resistance easy. It cannot be fairly charged against

Mr. Roosevelt that he has discriminated against any section or any class in the country. The scales, sometimes, one suspects, in spite of great provocation, have always been evenly held. Nor has he ever shirked a problem or tried to sidetrack it—unless, indeed, it be the Tariff problem. Englishmen naturally could not subscribe to the President's dictum that the Trust question and the Tariff question were entirely distinct, and they have seemed to detect in his various remarks on Reciprocity, Revision and the rescue of the Tariff from party politics a certain lack of his usual earnestness and practicality. The only act of his, however, they have seriously condemned was his recent Pensions Order. That struck Englishmen as a thoroughly pernicious measure for which no excuse was visible. It seemed to strike so decisively across all the principles for which Mr. Roosevelt had been supposed to stand and to augment so wantonly the greatest scandal in American public life, that for the first and only time people began to have their doubts, to wonder whether Mr. Roosevelt was really the reformer he seemed, and to ask if he too had descended to the level of "playing politics."

I have left myself little space in which to deal with Mr. Roosevelt's—or should it be Mr. Hay's?—policy in foreign affairs, and can only say that in all the incidents that have cropped up during the last three years—the Venezuelan mess, China, Panama, the Monroe Doctrine, Alaska and the Russo-Japanese war—American policy has won the heartiest admiration among all classes of Englishmen by its dexterity, its decisiveness and its admirable adaptation of means to ends. The suspicion of Anglophobia which attached to Mr. Roosevelt when he stepped into the White House, has long since been dissipated. We have, indeed, come to look upon him as a statesman whose influence will supplement that of Mr. McKinley, Lord Salisbury and Lord Pauncefoot in hastening the inevitable day of Anglo-American cooperation in more than one field of *Weltpolitik*. I need scarcely add that England can hardly conceive the possibility of Mr. Roosevelt's defeat next November. He towers head and shoulders above all his Democratic rivals except Mr. Cleveland. He has proved himself an administrator of absolutely the first rank. Englishmen simply take it for granted that Americans will think twice and thrice before they part with such a man.